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# PARKS CANADA PICTOGRAPH PROJECT





# Pictograph Preservation



Archaeologist Jack Porter at Sinclair Canyon.

- 1) Cultural Preservation - Traditional Knowledge
- 2) Physical Preservation - digital photography



# Working with our Aboriginal Partners

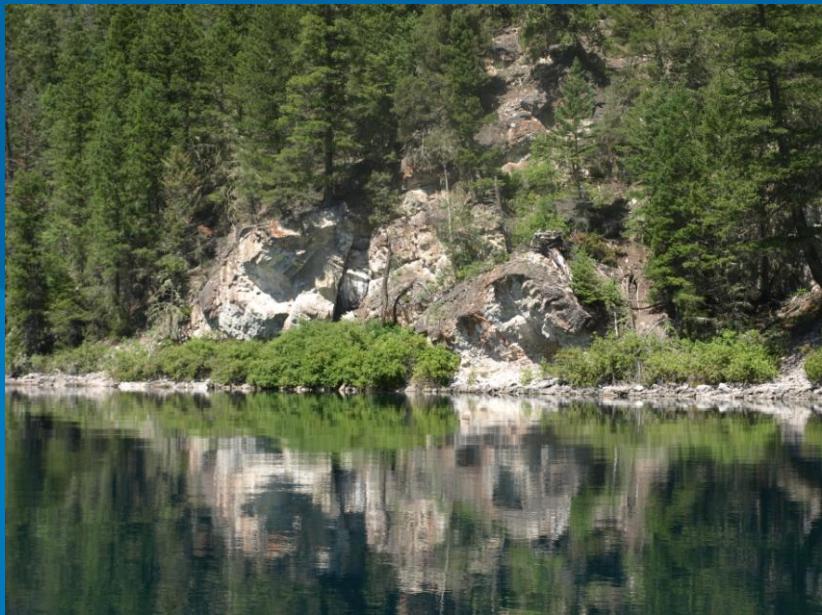
- Pictographs, or Aboriginal rock paintings, are classic examples of threatened sites.
- 
- They are fading both physically on the landscape and also from the memories of those who know their meaning.



First Nation Elders at the Paint Pots site.



# Aboriginal Context



One of three rock art sites near Kootenay National Park at Whiteswan Lake.



- Rock Art reflects the dynamic cultural history of Aboriginal People in this particular part of the world.



# Pictograph Sites as Cultural Landscapes

For Aboriginal people, pictograph sites include more than just rock art.

Each site location has a special meaning and cultural tradition that is part of their collective history.



Natural spring/ tributary near Bearspaw reservoir.

# Listening to the Elders

Traditional Knowledge plays a critical role in the interpretation and understanding of pictograph sites.

Only by interviewing First Nation Elders can cultural meanings be assigned to sites, and their lessons passed on.



Long bowmen depicted at Canal Flats south, Columbia Lake



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## Aboriginal Elder Interview

**Part I:** Discussing the four major concerns outlined above, the potential for positive understanding opportunities resulting from this type of project (eg a shared publication), and any new suggestions/concerns raised during consultations

- 1) the importance of understanding and documenting traditional knowledge: what should this include and what is the best way to present the information
  
- 2) the ongoing desecration and deterioration of Aboriginal sites: to indicate on a site-by-site basis where this is happening and what can be done by Parks managers to mitigate such activity in National Park settings
  
- 3) the need for meaningful consultation: in terms of the pictograph project, what will satisfy the need for meaningful cooperation and how should the information be presented in Parks Canada reports
  
- 4) the need for involving Aboriginal people in the dissemination and presentation of Aboriginal culture and traditional knowledge: what kinds of opportunities are present as a result of the pictograph project in terms of achieving this goal; eg. Don Maki (Ktunaxa) has suggested a shared publication where each First Nation is afforded to speak to the images in their own words and revenue is shared equally between the First Nation partners and Parks Canada;

- Elders from:

- Ktunaxa

- Piikani

- Stoney Nakoda

- Kinbasket





# Physical Preservation

- Modern developments
- Vandalism
- Natural weathering/  
mineral deposits





# Digital software enhancement

Shield-bearing  
warrior figure  
at Cochrane  
Ranch

Raw image at  
left

Enhanced  
image at right



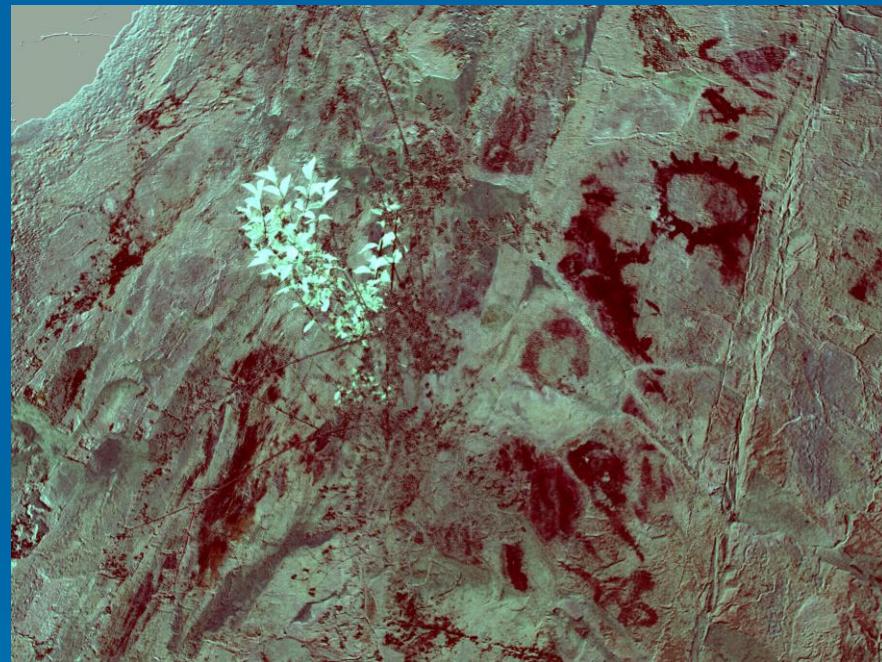
Cochrane Ranch Pictograph



## Washout Creek along Kootenay Lake

What can be seen with the naked eye (above)...

The enhanced image (at right)...



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Close-up of figures  
at Washout Creek.

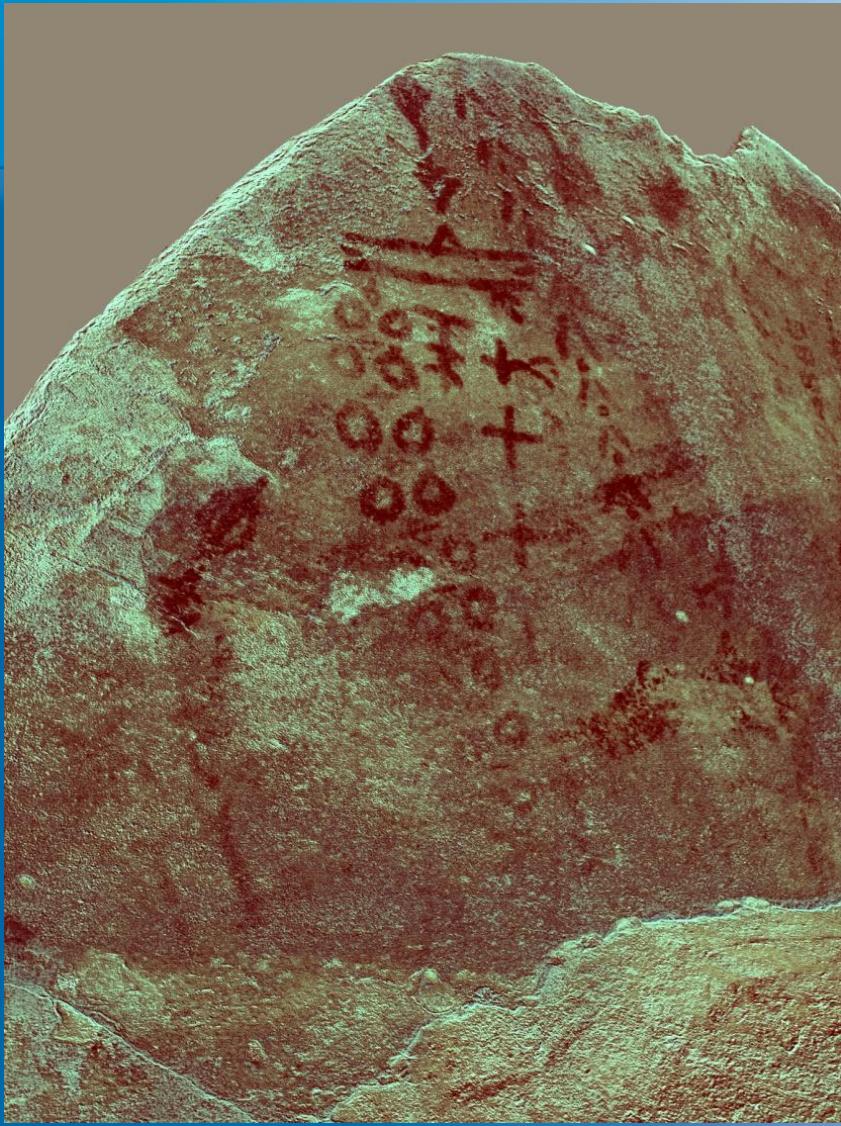


Parks  
Canada Parcs  
Canada

Canada



Pictograph at Okotoks erratic.



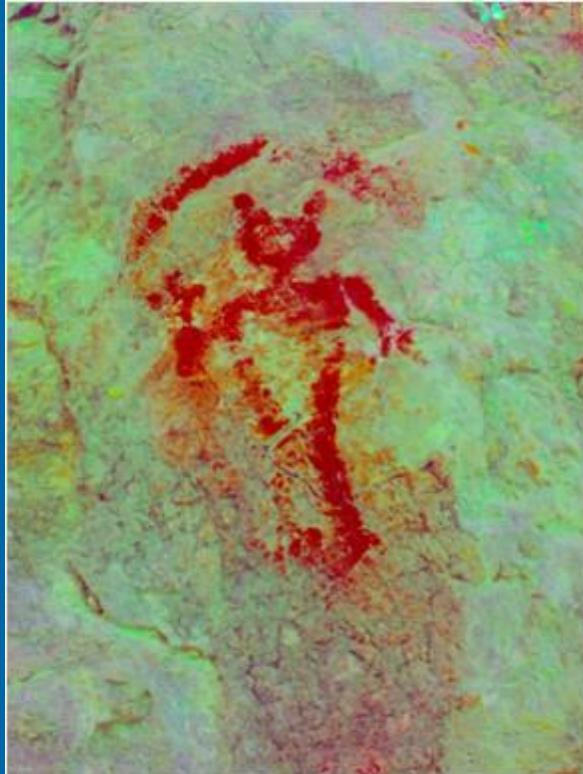
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# Communicating Our Findings

Conveying Traditional knowledge from the Elders to the public can help foster cultural respect.

It is also important to allow Aboriginal Elders to speak for themselves in terms of how best to preserve these sites for the future.



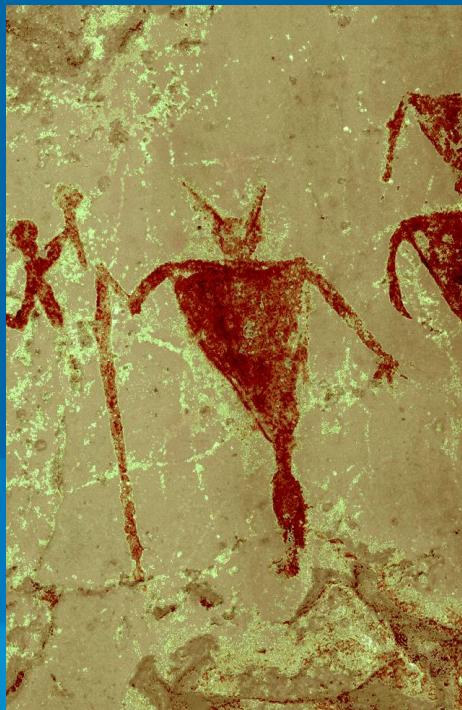
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# Project Deliverables

- 1) A set of collective site recommendations directly from the Elders regarding site management in National Park settings
- 2) A digital database of the 2500 photographs and Dstretch enhancements.
- 3) Four final reports, proprietary to each First Nation. They include full transcripts of the Elder interviews.
- 4) Pursue additional opportunities with Aboriginal Partners for future research, public programming and public education.
- 5) Share information with provincial agencies as approved by individual Aboriginal communities.



# Working with Other Government Agencies

Members from the British Columbia  
Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs,  
September 2011



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